

Module 5 : Critical Thinking

Consider the concept of 'fair-mindedness in critical thinking as explored in Reading 2, and answer the following questions.

Do the questions in MELTABRC raise issues about integrity?

The question of integrity may depend upon what is being read and analysed by MELTABRC. Some readings would lend the user of such a critical thinking frame to question integrity more than others do.

MELTABRC does give the reader a suitable framework for thinking deeper and truly analysing a text. Consider the main points, assumptions and biases the writer is making together will allow the reader to be critical and consider if the two are in conflict. Questioning the credibility and relevance allows the reader to connect with the context of the reading and go beyond the written piece.

Frameworks such as these are excellent for some texts because it guides students to consider more than they might from merely reading the text. However if a gifted student already considers such questions naturally I wonder if it too systematic for them and could include more open questions? The correct text will be essential for a real use of this activity as an incorrect text might lead students into looking for meaning that isn't there. The scenario in our text book was quite an opinionated piece that lent itself to this task suitably. Other suitable text such as newspapers, reviews etc would be suitable for this kind of activity.

I would also note the MELTABRC is somewhat negative in that the questions expect integrity issues in the text. For those students from a 'Collectivist Culture' this type of strategy, analysis and questioning credible sources may be a very alien experience. Therefore educators may need to consider how they plan and carry out such a task for students from such cultures, perhaps not setting such a task individually would be the easiest.

What is the relationship between critical thinking and integrity?

Critical thinking requires us to actively and skilfully conceptualise, apply, synthesise, and evaluate information gathered from or generated by observation, reflection, reasoning or communication (Paul, Elder & Bartell 1997, p4). This involves, disagreement, correction, self expression, or verbalisation of one's inner beliefs and opinions and may assume the importance of openly changing things or situations (Paul 1997).

Integrity refers to the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. Therefore when we are thinking critically we engage our own integrity, applying it to make sense of our understandings, feelings and opinions which shapes our thinking. We also use critical thinking to shape and question our integrity, reforming our beliefs and opinions.